

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 01956 01 OF 02 070353Z

70

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 SCCT-01 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04

CU-02 IO-11 /083 W

----- 099590

R 070255Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1958

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 1956

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES MOVES STEP AWAY FROM SMILING MARTIAL LAW

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: PAST WEEKS ACTIONS IN MANILA BY ACTIVIST ELEMENTS AMONG THE LEFT, STUDENTS, LABOR AND CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COUNTER-ACTIONS SURPASS ANY PREVIOUS LEVEL DURING EXISTENCE OF MARTIAL LAW. ACTIVISTS MOTIVATED AND UNITED TO UNUSUAL EXTEND BY SHARED PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND GOVERNMENT DIS-INTEREST. GOVERNMENT ARRESTED 200-300 AND EFFECTIVELY BROKE UP OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES. LONG FELT CONCERN AT GOVERNMENT FLIRTATION WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNIST FRONT BUKLURAN PLANS PROMPTED MILITARY--SUCCESSFULLY--TO OBTAIN PRESIDENTIAL ENDORSEMENT FOR FIRM CRACKDOWN ON WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVISTS. GOP CONCERN FOR PRESERVING NEW SOCIETY IMAGE DURING ALMOST CONCURRENT GROUP OF 77 MEETING AIDED AND ABETTED FIRM MILITARY ACTION. EMBASSY ASSUMES PRESIDENT WILL WISH TO RESTORE "SMILING MARTIAL LAW" AND RESTRAIN MILITARY BUT HIS ABILITY TO DO SO DEPENDS ON COOPERATION OF OPPOSITION. ACTIVISTS UNUSUALLY PERSISTENT BUT CHURCH HIERARCHY AND ORGANIZED LABOR PROBABLY WILLING COOPERATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 01956 01 OF 02 070353Z

KEY ISSUE WILL BE WHETHER GOVERNMENT CAN DEMONSTRATE SIN-

CERTITY AND COMPASSION. IF OPPOSITION CONTINUES AND GOVERNMENT DOES NOT COME ACROSS, MILITARY COUNTER-ACTIONS COULD IN TIME WIPE SMILE FROM FACE OF MARTIAL LAW AND FORCE WIDER SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY TO ASSESS COUNTRY'S FUTURE. NEW SOCIETY IN FOR ROUGHER TIMES AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

1. AGITATION BY STUDENTS, SQUATTERS, LABOR AND CHURCH ACTIVISTS AND COUNTER ACTIONS BY GOVERNMENT OVER PAST FEW WEEKS IN MANILA AREA SURPASSES ANY SIMILAR PERIOD OF ACTIVITY SINCE INTRODUCTION OF MARTIAL LAW. SOME ILLEGAL STRIKES ARE STILL CONTINUING BUT RELATIVELY SPEAKING WE ARE IN LULL.

2. AGITATION HAS PRESENTED UNUSUAL IMPRESSION OF BOTH UNITY AND OUTSPOKENNESS OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. EVIDENCE WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR OF ABORTIVE JAN 25 RALLY SUGGESTS UNUSUAL ABILITY OF A LEFTIST FRONT (BUKLURAN)--POSSIBLY IDENTIFIABLE AS COMMUNIST TO MANY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS IN REALITY-TO PULL IN BEHIND IT DISPARATE GROUPS FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC CHALLENGE OF MARTIAL LAW REGIME. BUKLURAN'S SUCCESS PROBABLY DUE LESS TO ITS ORGANIZATIONAL GENIUS THAN TO FACT THAT ACTIVISTS IN DIFFERENT SECTORS IN MANILA SHARE LARGELY COMMON PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND CAPRICIOUS OR CALLOUS GOVERNMENT INTEREST EXEMPLIFIED BY SUCH ACTS AS GRANT OF ALMOST EMPTY RIGHT TO STRIKE OR "RELOCATION" OF SQUATTERS. ALTHOUGH U.P. STUDENT ISSUE TOPICALLY SEPARATE, IT MAY HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY STIMULATED BY SENSE OF IDENTITY WITH OTHERS OPPRESSED BY MARTIAL LAW.

3. TOTAL SUM OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS--ROUND UP OF 48 COMMUNISTS, 18 STUDENT LEADERS, 20 SQUATTER LEADERS, 169 ILLEGAL STRIKERS, PLUS UNKNOWN NUMBERS INVOLVED IN ABORTIVE DEMONSTRATION--BOTH IMPRESSIVE AND IMMEDIATELY EFFECTIVE IN ENDING MOST OF AGITATION. ACTIONS ARE EXPRESSIVE OF A DETERMINATION AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE SEVERE MEASURES AGAINST PERSONS OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT THAT HAS PROBABLY NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE 1974 AND EARLIER. THAT DETERMINATION WAS STRIKINGLY ABSENT IN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP DURING THE CONFUSING DAYS SURROUNDING THE NON-PURGE OF 1975. ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN SWIFTLY AND SUREFOOTEDLY WITHOUT, SO FAR AS WE KNOW, UNDUE VIOLENCE; ROUNDUP OF STRIKERS REPORTEDLY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 01956 01 OF 02 070353Z

MODEL OF DECORUM. SUCCESSFUL ROUNDUP OF COMMUNISTS PARTICULARLY STRIKING (ALTHOUGH NO DOUBT DUE IN PART TO COMMUNIST INEPTNESS). ALTHOUGH GOP HAS RELEASED STRIKERS, IT STILL HOLDS MOST OTHER ACTIVISTS INCLUDING STUDENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 01956 02 OF 02 070354Z

70

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 SCCT-01 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04

CU-02 IO-11 /083 W

----- 099465

R 070255Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1959

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 1956

4. MILITARY HAS BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOME TIME BY GOP'S DEVELOPING TIES WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES INCLUDING RECENT OPENING OF CHINESE EMBASSY AND EARLY PROSPECT OF SOVIET EMBASSY. MILITARY BELIEVES THIS TREND HAS BEEN PARALLELED AND POSSIBLY SUPPLEMENTED BY WHAT IT REGARDS AS UNNECESSARILY PERMISSIVE ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT TOWARDS LEFTISTS AND VARIOUS ACTIVISTS. KNOWLEDGE OF BUKLURAN'S PLANS PRESUMABLY PROVIDED IMPETUS FOR MILITARY TO BREAK THROUGH TO PRESIDENT AND SECURE HIS ENDORSEMENT FOR ACTION. WE ASSUME MILITARY WOULD HOPE TO BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN TOUGH VIGILANCE IN FUTURE AGAINST SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES. DEFENSE SECRETARY PONCE ENRILE'S SPEECH JAN 31 EXPRESSIVE OF THIS DETERMINATION (SEPTEL).

5. SUCCESS OF MILITARY IN PERSUADING PRESIDENT TO LET IT TAKE FIRM STAND AGAINST COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS AND OTHERS PROBABLY DUE IN PART TO CONVENING OF GROUP OF 77 MEETING IN MANILA JAN 26, ONE DAY AFTER ABORTIVE RALLY. GOVERNMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY ENGAGED IN PREVENTIVE DETENTION AND OTHER MEASURES TO ENSURE PEACEFUL ENJOYMENT OF MANILA'S CHARMS BY IMPORTANT VISITORS. GROUP OF 77 HAS DRAWN IN UNPARALLELED NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THIRD WORLD WHICH PHILIPPINES ASSIDUOUSLY WOOING. AS CHAMPION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 01956 02 OF 02 070354Z

OF POLICY FAVORING THIRD WORLD CONTACT AND AS METRO MANILA GOVERNOR, MARCOS UNDOUBTEDLY LENT HER STRONG SUPPORT FOR MILITARY CRACKDOWN AND QUITE POSSIBLY ABETTED IT.

6. COMPETITION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND ACTIVISTS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT OVER. LATEST EPISODE REPRESENTS IN SENSE AN ESCALATION OF THAT COMPETITION. QUESTION IS WHERE IT WILL GO FROM HERE. IN TERMS OF TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PRACTICE, WE WOULD EXPECT PRESIDENT TO MAKE HIS POINT AND THEN BACK OFF. WE WOULD ASSUME IN ANY EVENT THAT PRESIDENT WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE MILITARY SO PROMINENT SINCE IT IS CONTRADICTORY TO IMAGE OF SMILING MARTIAL LAW AND ULTIMATELY THREATENS HIS OWN DECISION MAKING POWERS. APPOINTMENT OF ILOCANO CHUM BARBERO AS UNDERSECRETARY FOR DEFENSE FOR CIVIL AFFAIRS PRESUMABLY REFLECTS THIS INTEREST. ABILITY TO MAINTAIN SMILING MARTIAL LAW DEPENDENT, HOWEVER, ON WILLINGNESS OF ACTIVIST ELEMENTS TO PLAY THE GAME AND DESIST WHEN THEIR KNUCKLES HAVE BEEN RAPPED. UNTIL RECENTLY, OPPOSITION HAS PLAYED THE GAME BUT ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY PERSISTENT RECENTLY PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF THEIR CONCERN AT GOVERNMENT DISINTEREST IN THEIR PROBLEMS.

7. IF FACED WITH CONTINUED OPPOSITION, WE ASSUME GOVERNMENT WOULD FEEL FORCED TO RESPOND SEVERELY. PRECEDENT FOR SUCH ACTION RECENTLY REFURBISHED THIS PAST MONTH. AT SAME TIME, WE ASSUME GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK TO POLITICIZE DISPUTE THROUGH TALKS WITH CHURCH, THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH LABOR AND, SOME INCREASE IN COMPENSATION. MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION ARE PROBABLY UNDERWAY IN ANY EVENT TO COPE WITH RECENT TROUBLES. CHURCH HEIRARCHY AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS ARE LIKELY TO COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT IN THIS EFFORT TO AVOID MORE COMPREHENSIVE CONFRONTATION BUT FOR EFFORT TO SUCCEED OVER ANY PERIOD OF TIME GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO OFFER SOME COMPROMISE. EXTREMELY RESTRICTIVE GROUND RULES ON STRIKES JUST ANNOUNCED (MANILA 1848) WILL COMPLICATE TASK. BASIC ISSUE, HOWEVER, WHETHER GOVERNMENT CAN DEMONSTRATE SINCERITY AND COMPASSION IN RESPONDING TO NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

8. EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT TO CONTAIN CHALLENGE WILL BEAR WATCHING. IF OPPOSITIONISTS DO NOT COOPERATE AND CONTINUE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 01956 02 OF 02 070354Z

STRIKING OR OTHERWISE DISOBEYING GOVERNMENT WISHES, THE USE OF THE MILITARY TO DISCIPLINE THEM COULD CONCERN BROADER CIRCLES OF SOCIETY; IT COULD ALSO ENCOURAGE MILITARY INTO TRYING TO MAKE HABIT OF REPRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST OPPOSITION. MARTIAL LAW MIGHT THEN STAND UNMASKED AND ISSUE OF FUTURE

OF PHILIPPINES WOULD BE POSED MUCH MORE SQUARELY THAN IT HAS SO FAR UNDER MARTIAL LAW. SO FAR, HOWEVER, THE AGITATION CURRENTLY UNDER WAY IS LIMITED IN NUMBERS. ALTHOUGH UNUSUALLY BIG AND WELL ORGANIZED FOR MARTIAL LAW TIMES, IT DOES NOT YET HAVE BACKING OF SUCH ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS AS CHURCH LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZED LABOR, MIDDLE CLASS AND SO ON, NOR DOES IT HAVE CLEAR GOALS. NEVERTHELESS, ROAD TO NEW SOCIETY HAS GOTTEN ROUGH AND WE EXPECT BUMPY PERIODS AHEAD.
SULLIVAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, MARTIAL LAW, POLICIES, EXTREMISTS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANILA01956
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760047-0093
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760271/aaaackxc.tel
Line Count: 233
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <28 SEP 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PHILIPPINES MOVES STEP AWAY FROM SMILING MARTIAL LAW CINCPAC FOR POLAD
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, RP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006